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RHYMES

FROM THE

SANTA BABARA HILLS

CHARLES EDWARD STOWE

YB 27892

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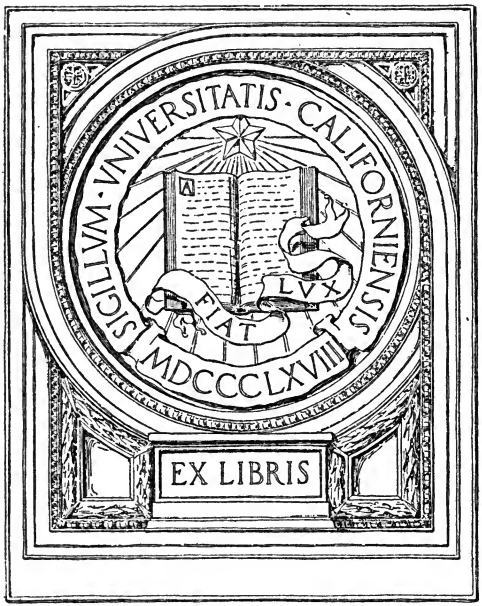
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RHYMES

FROM THE

SANTA BARBARA HILLS

CHARLES EDWARD STOWE

UNIV. CALIFORNIA

MY SONGS

Whene'er I stroll o'er hill or plain,
On canyon trails or by the sea,
They flit about my idle brain,
Or sing within my heart to me.

They fly on light fantastic wing
Of azure blue, or gold and brown,
And while they joy and sadness bring,
I pause awhile to write them down.

San Ysidro Ranch, the Winter of 1920.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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Charles Edward Stowe

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FORERUNNER

The writer of the little rhymes contained in this booklet is well aware that poetry, like music and painting, is an art with distinctive technique. He furthermore recognizes the fact that as one may be musical but not a musician, and artistic and not a painter or sculptor, so one may be poetic but not a poet. At the risk of appearing most deliciously naive to the critical reader, he would say that he is most profoundly ignorant both of the art and the technique of poetry.

From childhood the writer has had a certain native gift for rhyming, which has been a source of innocent diversion both to himself and his friends.

On one depressing occasion only has he sought wider publicity through editorial introduction, and then his fruits of poetic genius were returned to him most graciously and cheerfully with humiliating promptitude.

He is cheered, however, by the reflection that not all flowers grow in greenhouses, and that there is one rebellious little star that is the despair of orthodox astronomers owing to its apparent defiance of Newton's laws.

Is it not possible, then, that there may be poems that, like Topsy, "jest growed," in defiance of the critical autocracy?

CHARLES EDWARD STOWE.

San Ysidro Ranch,
Montecito, January, 1920.

416429

DEDICATION

TO HESTER

When Hester once doth homeward fly,
Her loss I never can supply,
Not if ten thousand times I try,
In vain endeavor.

For when she soon doth hence depart,
She takes with her my joy, my heart,
And spite of all my craft and art,
I'll miss her ever.

And oft I'll ride the mountain way,
Or by the oceanside I'll stray,
And think upon the happy day
We were together.

And this the tale that will be told,
That she so young, and I so old,
We parted ere our love grew cold—
Oh, yes, forever.

ALAS HESTER, EHEU ME MISERUM !

Darkness of night enshrouds my soul,
My Hester's gone forever.
Like funeral bells let minutes toll,
All down Time's fleeting river.

O cruel train, I plead in vain—
You whirl away my Hester,
And leave me but the sad refrain—
I loved her, then I missed her.

For o'er the gulf so deep and wide,
The fifty years between us,
The days we lived close side by side,
She was my Star, my Venus.

Non esurient neque sitient amplius, sec cadet super illos sol neque ullus aestus—Feb. 24, 1918.

DEAR FRIEND OF LONG AGO.

(Tune, Auld Lang Syne.)

"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them that shall be the heirs of salvation?"
—Epistle to the Hebrews.

How sweet your music in my heart.
It singeth soft and low.
Abide with me and ne'er depart,
Dear friend of long ago.

I stood by death's cold, icy stream,
And watched you pass its flow,
But still you ever near me seem—
Dear friend of long ago.

I live a life of fitful dreams;
But real the life you know.
You near me press, it ever seems—
Dear friend of long ago.

You hover o'er me while I sleep,
Pure as the falling snow.
You dry each bitter tear I weep—
Dear friend of long ago.

I feel that I am nearing fast
The land of joy you know,
And I shall meet you there at last—
Dear friend of long ago.

SAN YSIDRO RANCH

(Tune, Home, Sweet Home.)

In Florida sought De Leon in vain
The Fountain of Youth when he came from
old Spain.
But here you can find it, grow young in its
flow;
It sparkles and glistens in San Ysidro.

I dream in the Canyon, I stroll by the sea,
Each day it grows dearer and dearer to me.
No pleasures of cities, their pomp and their
show,
Can tempt me away from San Ysidro.

I climb to the hill-top, and, gazing afar,
See, over the fog-banks that shroud Miramar,
The sun shines brightly as fleeteth each day,
And friendly the stars when the moons wane
away.

In fond recollection they're near to my heart,
The many kind friends I've seen come and
depart.
So many dear people that I've learned to
know
Since I pitched my tent in San Ysidro.

O, Heaven, they say, is a land of delight,
Its meadows so fair, its angels so bright.
All this may be true; but one thing I know,
It has a strong rival in San Ysidro.

THE VIEW OVER MONTECITO

In soft'ning light of closing day,
I love to walk this dreamy way
That crests the undulating hill,
When all below is calm and still.

For then before my charméd eyes
Sweet miracles of beauty rise,
As Nature from her lavish store
Pours out the riches I adore.

Far to my right, in golden sheen,
The waters of the Channel seen,
Would woo the sinking sun to rest
Upon the sleeping ocean's breast.

As fairy fingers touch the keys
On slender eucalyptus trees,
I listen with a glad surprise
And hear the sweetest music rise.

Down in the pastures far below
I see the cattle grazing go,
And sounding o'er the hill-side swell
I hear the faintly tinkling bell.

Where, hiding 'mid the shady lees,
The timid houses peep from trees,
I see the smoke of chimneys rise
And melt in azure of the skies.

And far across the Channel's blue,
In serrate outline comes in view
The Channel Islands' rocky shore,
Where ocean Titans surge and roar.

Touched by the rosy sunset glow,
The stern old hill-tops melt and flow,
While tow'ring o'er Carpinterea
I see the giant Rincon rear.

White ghostly fingers trace afar
The foam-line where the beaches are,
And stretching on along the sea
The coast hills melt in mystery.

MONTECITO.

'Neath gnarled oak tree, old and gray,
I on a mossy boulder lay.
Bright flowers nestled at my feet;
Above a bird sang "SWEET SWEET SWEET"
'Twas in the days of early Spring,
When nymphs, and fairies gaily sing:—
"Montecito! Montecito!"

Betwixt the mountains and the sea
A fairy-land thou are to me.
For here is everything to please,
Rich olive groves, and orange trees,
And from the rocks and hills around,
Echoes thy name melodious sound:—
"Montecito! Montecito!"

All in along the Channel Drive
I'm thanking God that I'm alive.
The sunny wavelets on the sea,
Are sparkling, sparkling merrily.
Dear children playing on the shore,
And flowers blooming evermore:—
"Montecito! Montecito!"

Swift day treads on the heel of day,
And new moons haste to wane away:—
Our friends may come, our friends may go;
Old Ocean's tides may ebb and flow;
But thou wilt faithful bide we know;
O just because we love thee so:—
"Montecito! Montecito!"

IN SAN YSIDRO CANYON.

I love this canyon, for it seems
A place of mystery and dreams.
Weird faces on the rocks around,
And shadows creeping o'er the ground.
And from each gnarled and mossy tree
So many eyes are watching me.
Shy nymphs bathe in the stream below;
They're Dryads where the oak trees grow.
Soft voices make a murm'ring sound,
Anon a titt'ring laugh goes round,
And though I can no person see,
I know they're making sport of me.
But in the game I am left out
By these strange beings round about.
Among the leafy boughs on high
From time to time I hear a sigh,
And with a dim and muffled roar
The breakers answer from the shore.

And are there shades and spirits then
Of those who once were living men?
And lies it round us like a cloud,
A world that doth those beings shroud?
'Twere easy then indeed to see
How interesting death might be;
To wake as from a troubled dream,
And then another world be seen,
As when on journeys here we roam,
And then, returning, seek our home;
So in some brighter world above
To join with those we know and love,
To feel all trouble flee away,
All sorrow and all care, some day,
Just over there.

SAN YSIDRO CANYON.

O let me in this canyon be,
Beneath the open sky,
Where I can gaze far out to sea,
When's time for me to die.

Let rocks and trees be round my head,
My brothers and my friends,
The leaves for me a downy bed,
When my life's journey ends.

Spare me the cautious, muffled tread,
The close and stuffy air,
The faces bending o'er my bed
With most depressing care.

But here, where all is bright and fair,
Let me be lying when
I launch my blithesome plane in air
And soar o'er sea again.

And let there be no mummery
O'er my unconscious frame;
When I have flown far out to sea,
Just give it to the flame.

O joy to mingle with the air,
Melt in the azure-blue,
To leave all sorrow and all care,
When my life's journey's through.

To sink into the mystery,
The beauty that I love,
Of Nature ever dear to me,
Around, beneath, above.

SAN YSIDRO

There comes to me a legend old
Of this fair, sunny land
Before 'twas cursed by love of gold
And selfish, grasping hand.

There were no multimillionaires
With their luxurious ease,
Each one a sleek and pampered mouse
Within his mighty cheese.

There was no noisome motor-breath
To poison all the roads
And scare the horses half to death
And make them drop their loads.

The life was most idyllic, quaint,
On this enchanted shore,
When San Ysidro, that dear saint,
Lived in the days of yore.

He raised such crops of waving grain
As no man raises now;
He raised them not for greed of gain,
For angels held the plough.

"How raise such crops," the neighbors cried,
"Thou man of prayer and vow?"
"O, while I pray," the saint replied,
"The angels hold the plough."

His life on earth one sacrament,
He is in heaven now;
He lived on earth serene, content,
While angels held the plough.

O, would you raise such crops as he,
Just make his holy vow:
"My God, appoint my work for me,"
"Let angels hold the plough."

THEODORA

Her smile is like the suns that shine
On fresh and dewy morn.
Her hair as graceful shadows stream
Across a velvet lawn.
Her eyes are as still mountain lakes
Reflect the sun at dawn.
Her cheeks in irridescent tint
Are like the pale pink rose.
Her teeth like pearls that shine and glint
Are white as mountain snows.
I see her glide about the ranch,
And glitter as she goes.

THE SANTA BARBARA HILLS.

My dear old friends they've grown to be,
These rugged hills beside the sea.
Yet often through my being thrills
A sad, still music from these hills.
As they are now, so once were we;
As they are now, so shall we be.
Their stony gaze on us is bent;
Their silence is most eloquent;
They grimly watch our ebb and flow—
We short-lived mortals here below.
They know we live our little day
And then we quickly pass away,
As wave on wave breaks on the shore
And dies with sad retreating roar,
Forever and forevermore !

I know them well, and whence they came,
Born of the volcano's womb of flame !
But O ! the anguish they have known
And borne in darkness and alone !
Titanic forces, long since spent,
Their tortured vitals tore and rent,
Till down they sank to wat'ry graves
Beneath the angry, hissing waves.
They sank to rest, to dream, to sleep,
Far down beneath the ocean deep,
Till earthquakes shook both sea and shore
And waked them from their dreams once more.
Yea ! waked them up and made them stand
In serried rows along the land !

Their faces old are sere and brown
With gulleys where their tears ran down.
Like us, they often long for rest—
To sink beneath the ocean's breast;
But still they fear, when Titans wake,
The trembling firmament should quake,
And while the stars affrighted flee,
They sink into a fiery sea.
Such thoughts as these our souls appall !
Such haunting fears are in us all.

Great sentinels along the land,
May we, like you, each faithful stand
Till bugles sound at break of day
To call us from our posts away.

O LOVE DIVINE

O love divine, to Thee I flee—
Pecavi domine, pecavi.
Unworthy I, yet thou dost come—
Sub tectum meum, sub tectum meum.
Abide Thou evermore with me—
Confitebor tibi domine.

SLEEP. BELOVED. GENTLY SLEEP

Sleep on, Beloved, gently sleep.
Ye Birds sing soft above her.
O wake her not with me to weep
Her broken-hearted lover.

Thy grave's to me a holy shrine,
My love the altar-fire,
And I'll not wake that sleep of thine
For my earth-born desire.

Through summer heat and winter snow
Thou sleepest calmly on,
Nor wakest in thy couch below
When brightest suns have shone.

How oft, how oft on far-off shore
I've loved and yearned towards thee
Who sleepest now forevermore,
Thy grave so far from me.

From thy dear image in my heart
I can be parted never,
So pure, so beautiful thou art,
My Love, my Joy forever.

You hover round me while I wake;
You melt into my dreams,
Tho pain I suffer for thy sake,
But joy to me it seems.

For thee no ill the future hides;
The present hath no pain.
A cloistered stillness e'er abides
That knows no loss, no gain.

In life's hot fret and rude alarm
'Tis peace to think of thee
Within thy grave so still and calm
Where thou dost wait for me.

Sleep on, Beloved, gently sleep,
From pain and grief rest taking;
Soon side by side in slumber deep
Our sleep will know no waking.

I FEEL I AM A BOY AGAIN

I know that I have older grown,
And many happy years have flown,
Since merry days went sparkling by,
Beneath a blithesome sunny sky;
But I can still their music hear,
It joyous sounds within my ear.
The music of a soul that's young,
When life is fresh and just begun.
And when I catch its gay refrain,
I feel I am a boy again.

From fogs and mists that shroud the past,
These elfish shapes are rising fast.
The forms of boys and girls I knew:
All glitt'ring like the morning dew.
We play again the pranks we played,
And all the jokes and fun we made.
And all around we romp and race,
A smile upon each happy face:—
O then my joy I can't contain.
I feel I am a boy again.

I sail with boys and girls I knew:—
O such a careless happy crew.
I hold the tiller, trim the sail,
And friends in other boats we hail.
The girl I love sits in the bow.
It seems to me I see her now.
I see the pretty plaid she wore,
That jaunty hat I did adore.
I strive to catch her eye in vain.
I feel I am a boy again.

I skirt along the old hedge-row.
I seek the dear old house I know.
I feel as wings were on my feet.
The apple-blossoms are so sweet.
I hear the crickets chirp and sing.
I smell the violets I bring.
She's sitting in the window there.
I know she loves the gifts I bear.
I hear her sing. O sweet refrain:—
I feel I am a boy again.

THE FAIRY BELLS RING

From slender eucalyptus trees
Whose tops are swaying in the breeze,
I hear the fairies' silver bells ring,
"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling"—O days of Spring,
When fairy bells ring *"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling."*

O how the birds exultant sing,
And breezes sweetest odors bring,
And then the fairies' silver bells ring,
"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling"—O days of Spring,
When fairy bells ring *"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling."*

I have no sorrow, I have no care;
They float away upon the air;
They go when fairies' silver bells ring,
"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling"—O days of Spring,
When fairy bells ring *"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling."*

The brook in the canyon sings its song,
Happy and merry it rushes on,
And to its music fairy bells ring,
"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling"—O days of Spring,
When fairy bells ring *"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling."*

Of death and such I'm ne'er afraid;
From stuff of birds and flowers I'm made;
I'll float away as fairy bells ring,
"Ting ting ting-a-ling ling"—O days of Spring,
My requiem the fairy bells ring.

NE TE QUAESIVERIS EXTRA

I met a queer flower when walking one day,
A very odd flower that grew by the way.
Said I, Queer flower, and how do you do?
All the better, dear sir, for my meeting you.

Said I, Queer flower, if you grew in the ranch,
So strange is your seed, so crooked your branch,
The people would pass you, exclaiming, Indeed,
That flower's no flower, but only a weed.

Then said the queer flower, I'd have you to know
The way that God made me is the way that I grow;
I'm always myself, I am what I am.
I'm happy to meet you; I make my salaam.

THE RAIN

I sit within my loved *Jasmine,*
O such delightful quarters,
Where all around is murm'ring sound,
The songs of rushing waters.

The rain, the rain, the blessed rain
I hear it falling, falling,
The rills and brooks are full again,
And from the steeps are calling.

Dark clouds are veiling all the sky,
The rain pours from their fountains;
The Canyon brook goes singing by,
Descending from the mountains.

Like waters of this brook I know,
My days and years shall be,
They'll all go swiftly whirling by,
And n'er come back to me.

THE BIRTHDAY

As the stream flows on forever,
One year more,
Fondest hopes and strong endeavor;
Garner we the fruit they bore
On its shore?

Thro' the days and nights before us
On we glide.
Suns and stars are silent o'er us.
Would we know the fate they hide?
How decide?

Doubting stand we at the portal,
Far from home.
Trembling, each a short-lived mortal,
O'er the waves that rage and foam
Still we roam.

MY LOVE, MY JOY, MY DAUGHTER.

Along the paths oft trod with thee,
In canyon still, beside the sea,
Thy blithesome voice I seem to hear,
Thy joyous presence hov'reth near,
My love, my joy, my daughter !

Man cannot live by bread alone,
Nor could all worlds lost love atone !
I could not live deprived of thee,
So one our souls in sympathy !
My love, my joy, my daughter !

Deprived of thee ? that could not be:
Of thee all nature speaks to me !
The gentlest wind is thy caress,
Through sunlit glade you near me press.
My love, my joy, my daughter !

Loved ones, long lost, I find in thee.
Oft in thy voice they speak to me.
Thy mother, and my sister too,
They live and love again in you.
My love, my joy, my daughter !

THE PICTURE OF MY DAUGHTER.

(To the artist.)

I find it so,
Where'er I go,
    That love is truest art,
And love that painted this bright sketch
    Endears it to my heart.

You surely knew
To bring to view
    What nature only taught her,
A striking living attitude
    Of my dear little daughter.

The lines you drew,
So fair and true,
    The attitude you caught her,
Make doubly dear the work you do,
    This picture of my daughter.

DEATH OF AN ARTIST FRIEND

When I awoke, a golden light
Was breaking o'er the hill
And day was wrestling with the night,
Tho' stars were shining still.

As in a trance or dream I lay
And watched this wondrous thing,
How nights are vanquished by the days
That light and gladness bring.

And then I thought of him who made
My poor blind eyes to see
A world with beauty overlaid,
Type of a world to be.

Shall he who taught me see no more
The sunlight on the hills
And beauty in the sea and shore
That all my being thrills?

I look unto the golden light
That's breaking o'er the hill;
A day that's wrestling with the night
Will come ! I'm sure it will.

A day so bright, so wondrous fair,
So full of tender grace;
And I shall know and love him there,
And meet him face to face.

THE DEAREST DOG THAT I HAVE KNOWN.

(At the grave of the friend and companion of my childhood).

The dearest dog that I have known—
He was a black and tan—
Now sleeps beneath this mossy stone;
We always called him "Dan"!

As vines that grow about this stone
Are ever fresh and green,
Just so my love for Dan has grown
In all the years between.

His eyes, his ears, his tail expressed
In language of the soul
The tumults of his loving breast
That he could not control.

One paw upon my foot he'd place,
His jaw upon my knee,
While gazing up into my face
In tender sympathy.

And O ! the wondrous hidden deeps
Of those pathetic eyes !
'Twas like the mystery that sleeps
Behind the summer skies.

And then I've seen them flash and glint
When enemies drew near;
His hardy soul was like a flint,
A soul that knew no fear.

And when I in the darkness woke,
He lay beside my bed,
And with his dear old tail he spoke,
And I knew what he said.

God bless his dear old doggy heart,
Wherever he may be !
O cruel fate that made us part,
And sad the mystery !

But when I cross the Styx amain
In Charon's ancient ark,
I know I'll see dear Dan again
And hear his joyous bark.

HUMOROUS POEMS

THE GRIEFS OF BIBULOUS BILL
OR
THE WET'S LAMENT.

Morning and evening star,
But not a drink for me !
There is no one behind the bar.
What can the matter be ?

But such a drought as makes me weep,
As I stand here alone
And thirst for beer drawn from the deep,
So cool, with sparkling foam.

O whiskysour and brandysmash—
I wonder where they are !
I cannot buy them now for cash;
They no more cross the bar !

O could I turn into a fish
And swim around the sea !
There's water, water everywhere—
But not a drink for me !

O could I be an angel bright,
And with the angels fly !
There's not a thing to drink in sight,
And I must still go dry !

SLANDERERS AND FLIES.

As soon as the dawn begins to peep
Upon the eastern skies,
They come to rob me of my sleep—
The wicked little flies.

They light upon my wrists and crawl
'Way to my finger-tips;
And then—I hate it worst of all—
They bite me on my lips.

And if in desperation I
Dive down beneath the clothes,
He hunts me out, some wicked fly,
And bites me on my nose.

And when in sorrow and despair
Up from my bed I rise,
I vainly hunt 'most everywhere
To find those cruel flies.

They're like the tales men whisper round,
The slander and the lies,
For those who start them can't be found;
They vanish like the flies.

The dignity and worth of man,
Low in the dust it lies;
Defend himself no human can
From slanderers and flies.

THE NAUGHTY MOBILE

I'm out for blood, I thirst for gore !
I get it where I can.
I drink it down and thirst for more,
From woman, child or man.

I jump around the corner quick
And hit 'em as they fly,
And so I'm on to ev'ry trick,
And young and dev'lish spry.

I do not fear the street patrol,
For they will only say
An auto is beyond control;
Let folks keep out the way.

THE SCHAUER
PRINTING STUDIO

MY LOVE

O while I draw this mortal breath,
Her dearest name is given.
Forevermore, in life, in death,
To love her be my heaven.

Ye Powers above, I fondly pray,
From ev'ry ill defend her.
Keep watch and ward about her way,
And ev'ry blessing send her.

Ye suns by day that shine so bright,
Ye stars at night watch o'er her.
O tell her she's my dear delight,
And truly I adore her.

Ye birds in air that sweetly sing:—
Go trill your notes above her,
And so to her my message bring,
And tell her how I love her.

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